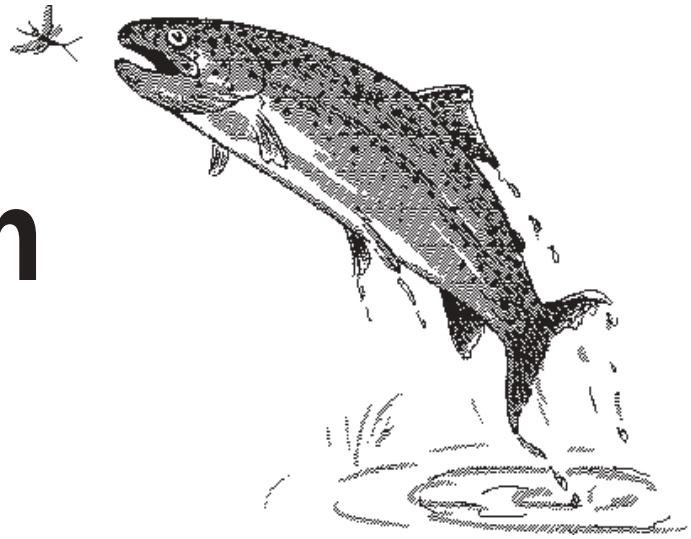
Electric The Evergreen Trout



November 2002 The Newsletter of the Evergreen Chapter of Trout UnlimitedVol. 20 No. 11

From The Prez,

In Bear Creek news, the Colorado DOW did their annual electroshocking census two weeks ago. Final results will be sent to us by the first of the year, but Mindy Clark (DOW Aquatics Biologist for our area), gave us a verbal preview. As expected, fish numbers were way down, especially upstream -- O'Fallon Park and Bear Creek Cabins (between Kittredge & Evergreen). Downstream trout populations fared better, especially the larger browns. A significant number of small "yearling" trout were seen in all four sections surveyed, which could mean decent catchable size trout will be available in 2-4 years -- barring anymore drastic effects on the stream. All in all, this is fairly good news compared to the devastation that we expected to see. Mindy felt the deeper pools helped fish survival, something we'll definitely keep in mind in our future stream rehab work. Incidentally, Troy Thompson has agreed to help us submit a "Fishing Is Fun" Grant early next year, to help further those efforts. Also, keep in mind Bear Creek is still closed to fishing from the dam downstream.

Six of us spent last Saturday hawking John Fielder tickets at King Soopers, with limited success. Unfortunately, various political candidates/causes, and a local pet group were there as well. We'll probably try again this coming Saturday morning, so please call John or myself if you can help. To date, ticket sales have been quite slow, so we really need your help and attendance at the November 19th event (see enclosed insert) to replenish our dwindling coffers. We may phone the membership, so don't be surprised if you get a call. Many of John's books (which make great gifts) will be on sale that night, and we do get 40% of the proceeds. **REMEMBER,** this event **takes the place of** our regular November meeting.

Also, we encourage your attendance at our annual **Holiday Extravaganza** (see the other side of the enclosed insert) **at Dick Wheeler's home on December 7th.** The holiday party **takes the place of** our regular December meeting. In addition, note that this month's board meeting has been moved to Tuesday the 26th, to avoid some Thanksgiving conflicts. We will schedule the December Board meeting at that time.

Those of you who missed the final "last-Friday-of-the-month-free-fishing-day-at-Buchanan-Ponds" of the summer, should give yourself a good swift kick. One lucky member coaxed close to twenty trout up at the lower pond on large dries, after spending a few hours dredging with no success.

Hope to see you, your fishin' buddy, your neighbor, and maybe your wealthiest friend on November 19th. Be sure to get your tickets from any board member ahead of time, as seating is limited!!!

Rich

The Evergreen Chapter of Trout Unlimited meets the third Wednesday of the month at Evergreen's Sports Grill in the Tanoa Center. Join us for Dinner/Chapter Business at 6:30pm followed by the program at ~7:30pm.

John Fielder Program And Silent Auction

Evergreen Trout Unlimited is pleased to announce that **Colorado's premier nature photographer, John Fielder,** will be the featured guest at this year's ETU fundraiser. This exciting pre-holiday event will be held at the historic **Chief Hosa Lodge,** Tuesday, November 19th, with doors opening at 6 pm and the program beginning at 7 pm. John will present a slide program highlighting his newest book entitled ***John Fielder's Best of Colorado*.** This book is the culmination of driving hundreds of thousands of miles around Colorado. From Denver to Grand Junction, Steamboat Springs to Pagosa Springs, it unveils 2700 great places to stay, play, and get away. Organized by region and town, this comprehensive 464 page guide recommends accommodations, restaurants, special events, day hikes, museums, historic monuments, and more. The book also contains over 365 color photos, and includes directions and tips for photographing each location. There will be door prizes, a silent auction, refreshments, and cash bar. Tickets are $10 in advance or at the door.

In addition to John's presentation, we will have some great items on the silent auction block...

Silent Auction Items

• 6 river guide maps (produced by Al Marlowe) - Colorado, Eagle, Rio Grande, and Blue Rivers; + 1 Buchanan Ponds pass (10 punches)

• Gift Certificate - 1 night's lodging at Bear Creek Cabins; and $25 Gift Certificate at Soho Restaurant

• One Woman's Flyfishing shirt from the Blue Quill Angler - can be exchanged for size and color

• One Man's Flyfishing shirt from the Blue Quill Angler - can be exchanged for size and color

• Hand-made landing net - custom engraved for buyer - from Jackson Gear and Mike Skyrock

• Guide trip for 2, locally (Farmer's Union), before April 15, 2003, with Colorado Fly Fishing Adventures

• Set of 3 books by Terry Grosz - inscribed for purchaser

• Cord of Wood (split!) - you pick up from Lam Tree Service

• Orvis 5/6 Battenkill reel disc

• Colorado topo CD, 4 printed maps on waterproof paper from National Geographic maps

• 40% off one fly rod of your choice from Scott Fly Rods

• 5 fishing guide maps produced by Shook Books - Gunnison, Roaring Fork/Fryingpan, South Platte, Arkansas, Colorado Rivers; + 1 Buchanan Ponds pass (10 punches)

• '98 Loomis IMX 7wt, 2pc 9' fly rod

• Fly rod carrying case - holds several rods

• Gift basket from the Village Gourmet

• 2 nights lodging for up to 4 people at the Wooden Rifle Ranch in Wyoming near the Miracle Mile

In addition, there will be...

Door Prizes:

• Book 'For Love of Wildness' by Terry Grosz - inscribed for the winner

• Hand-built fly rod, 6 wt, 2pc, 8'

• Flyfishing gift from Evergreen Drug

WE'RE LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING YOU THERE!!!

Karen Christopherson & Randy Huiting

"The Big Straw" -- A Pipe Dream?

In the wake of Colorado's drought, one major new project that has gotten increased media attention is the **Colorado Aqueduct Return Project (CARP)**, better known as the **"Big Straw".** The idea behind CARP may sound attractive at first blush: to capture and use water to which Colorado is entitled under interstate compacts through a pipeline near the state line. CARP would capture water from the Colorado River below Grand Junction -- after it has had a chance to flow down west slope rivers and be used by west slope water users -- **and pump it back up through a pipeline to the Continental Divide** where it could be released back for re-use on the western slope or delivered to the Front Range. Unfortunately, CARP is the kind of project where the more you, learn the less you like it. It would almost certainly involve large, damaging reservoirs **(including opening Two Forks for consideration again)**; it would create major water quality problems; it would be enormously expensive; and the purported supply of "excess" Colorado River water **may be much less than some have suggested.** Nonetheless, the Colorado Water Conservation Board will ask the Colorado legislature to fund a $500,000 feasibility study of the Big Straw next year. Some of the questions the Big Straw raises include:

Reliability. The premise behind CARP is that Colorado has large quantities of unused water in the Colorado River basin to which it is entitled under interstate compacts. Some state officials have claimed that Colorado is entitled to 3.8 million acre-feet (MAF) of water each year. Those figures are **based on unusually wet periods,** however, Colorado's actual entitlement is probably closer to 3 MAF and perhaps could be as low as 2.5 MAF. By 1985, Colorado had already developed 2.3-2.6 MAF, so it is less than clear that we have huge quantities of water still available for pumping through the Big Straw.

Future needs. Even if there is sufficient water still available to run the Big Straw at proposed rates **(400,000 acre-feet per year),** tapping Colorado's full entitlements and creating dependence on them would be unwise. It leaves no room to do further

Straw...

development to meet future needs. Once we've fully used our share, the only choice will be to take water away from other existing users to meet new demands. The state's compact entitlement is like an investment account that Colorado can draw on for future needs -- it doesn't make sense to spend it all to support our needs today, at the expense of our tomorrows.

Large dams. The way the Big Straw is usually described, it's as if there aren't any dams involved. However, there likely would be. If the project were intended to provide drought protection by carrying over water from wet years for use in dry years, you would need large reservoirs -- either where the straw would take out water near the state line, or at the other end of the system, or both. Current reservoirs won't meet this need (if they had enough space to deal with dry-year needs, we would have no need for the Big Straw). The Manager of Denver Water has said, **"if they build this project, every canyon along the Front Range will be getting another look."** The Big Straw will create new battles over large, environmentally-destructive dams.

Water quality. The Big Straw would also move **large volumes of poor-quality water** from the state line **into the high-quality waters** of Colorado's high country. Water from the sending point (Colorado River at the state line) will carry far more sediment, salinity, selenium, total dissolved solids, and other pollutants than the comparatively pristine waters near the Continental Divide. This would pose a major threat to high-country rivers and the fisheries they support. Aside from other water quality parameters, the temperature of the imported water in the Colorado could be **20 degrees (F) or more greater** than the high-mountain water temperatures and dumping it into streams could create havoc for fish and other aquatic life. CARP could give Colorado just that -- **carp fisheries** in what used to be gold-medal trout waters.

Cost. The pipeline for the Big Straw alone could cost **$2.5 billion.** Factoring in new reservoirs for carry-over storage, environmental mitigation, new electric power generation to fuel the pumps, that cost would soar to as much as **$10 billion** -- plus annual operating costs in the **hundreds of millions.** CARP doesn't make economic sense -- which is why no private water user has pursued it before.

CTU Currents - Summer 2002

Kudos...

...to **Randy Huiting, Karen Christopherson, Rich Reynolds, and Jill Haller** for their help with the newsletter.

...to **Master Printers Inc. of Evergreen** for copying and folding.

Ed.

TU Slams Black Canyon Decision

In late September the Bush administration announced that it will **negotiate away most of its water right for the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park** located in Colorado, a decision that will have **a devastating impact** on the park and its gold medal trout fishery.

This move is the latest in **a long series of battles to protect the river** that created the canyon. Carved over millions of years by the Gunnison River, the Black Canyon is unique for its narrow opening, sheer jagged walls and depth of over 2,000 feet. **It was designated as a national monument in 1933 to "protect the roar of the river,"** and elevated to national park status in 1999.

Though dams and other water diversions had seriously altered the river's natural flow regime, in 1978 a Colorado water judge awarded the Park Service a water right to **"conserve and maintain in an unimpaired condition the scenic, aesthetic, natural, and historic objects of the monument, as well as [its] wildlife."** The judge directed the federal government to return to court within five years to quantify and finalize this water right.

Intervening events delayed the federal government's effort to quantify that right until the waning hours of the Clinton administration. When the Park Service filed its quantification application in January 2001, it sought **a natural flow regime, with both base flows and higher spring peak flows.** In addition to assuring the protection of the scenic and ecological values of the national park, the proposal, and particularly the spring peak flows, would benefit the resident trout fishery and four fish species in the Colorado and Gunnison Rivers listed under the federal Endangered Species Act.

The state, along with developers and agricultural interests, opposed robust flows for the park. These parties would prefer to use the Gunnison's water for other purposes. They found a sympathetic ear in the Bush administration and a willingness to allow the water that is the heart of the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park to be treated as a commodity **to be sprinkled in the future on blue grass lawns** and alfalfa fields hundreds of miles away.

"No one would think of sucking the Colorado River dry just before it enters the Grand Canyon, or putting a shopping mall in the middle of the Gettysburg battlefield or allowing the development of a hard rock mine at the base of Mount Rushmore. Failing to protect healthy water flows through the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park **-- the water that made the canyon the unique resource it is today --** is no different," said Charles Gauvin, TU's President and CEO.

The Administration's decision, **which was made without public input,** would trade meaningful protection for the river for a more junior priority water right and a guarantee of substantially less water flowing downstream through the park, the combination of which Gauvin says makes much more likely the possibility that the Gunnison River through the national park will run at a trickle in the not-too-distant future.

Gauvin added, "The Gunnison is an example of all that the American public holds dear about National Parks. We call on the Bush administration to reconsider this decision and to use the upcoming negotiations to protect the water that this special river needs."

For more information, contact Melinda Kassen at (303) 440-2937 or mkassen@tu.org .

??? What's Happening ???

November 2002

19th (Tu) ETU PROUDLY PRESENTS...

John Fielder's

"*Best of Colorado*"

*** Slide show and book sale/signing ***

*** Evergreen TU Silent Auction ***

Chief Hosa Lodge at 6:00p

Tickets ($10) available from any board member.

Seating IS limited, so get your ticket NOW!!!

26th (Tu) ETU Board Meeting
Rib Crib (Other Side) - 6:30p

December 2002

7th (Sa) ETU's Annual

*** Holiday Extraveganza ***

See insert for time, directions, what to bring, etc.

December Board Meeting TBA

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On the web - www.tu.org; www.cotrout.org; www.evergreentrout.org
Contact any of us with questions, suggestions, or spare time.

Editorial Policy

All submissions to the newsletter must be received by the Editor by the **1st Friday of the month**. Submissions may be on 3 1/2" disc or e-mailed. All items are subject to editing/space limitations. Articles are copyrighted by the author unless otherwise noted. **All phone numbers are Area Code 303 unless otherwise noted.** Call me for additional information.

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